

**OPENING STATEMENT OF REP. THOMAS PETRI
CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS, TRANSIT, AND PIPELINES**

**OVERSIGHT HEARING ON
TRANSIT AND OVER-THE-ROAD BUS SECURITY
March 29, 2006**

In today's hearing, we will examine issues related to the security of transit and intercity bus systems, including the roles and responsibilities of the Federal Transit Administration and the Department of Homeland Security; the state of preparedness in the transit industry; and Federal programs and activities that help meet the security needs of U.S. public transportation systems.

Worldwide, the statistics on terrorist attacks are alarming.

According to the Mineta Transportation Institute, forty-two percent of all terrorist attacks over the ten-year period from 1991 to 2001 were carried out against rail systems and buses.

In just the last two years, we have seen graphic evidence that transit systems are popular terrorist targets. In March 2004, hidden bombs killed 192 commuter rail passengers in Madrid, Spain.

Even more recently, last July, suicide bomb attacks on the London Underground and buses killed 56 people.

Transit systems are particularly vulnerable to attack because they have open access with frequent stops and transfer points, and serve high concentrations of people in crowded quarters.

The threat is very real, but it is very challenging to meet this threat. Federal funding for transit security has not been particularly robust. Over four years, from fiscal year 2003 through 2006, Congress has appropriated only about \$387 million to the Department of Homeland Security for transit security grants.

In the U.S., there are 9.5 billion passenger trips on transit annually. This means that we have averaged, over those four years, only about one penny of federal funding for security per transit passenger trip. Compare this to aviation, where the average federal security investment is about \$9 per airline passenger.

However, the public transportation industry has not been passively waiting for the federal government to save the day. U.S. transit agencies have invested more than \$2 billion of their own funds for enhanced security measures. Even with this extraordinary local investment, transit security activities still are not being adequately funded. The American

Public Transportation Association estimates that there is a total transit security funding need of \$6 billion.

In addition to providing an appropriate level of funding for security improvements, we must ensure that the federal agencies charged with oversight of the safety and security of these public transportation systems have a clear plan for the best possible protection against, and response to, any deliberate harm, whether the threat is from international terrorists or domestic sources.

SAFETEA LU required the Federal Transit Administration and the Department of Homeland Security to develop and execute a transit annex to the two departments' Memorandum of Understanding, which the agencies jointly issued in September 2005. The annex spells out, in some detail, the roles and responsibilities of the Federal Transit Administration, the DHS Office of Grants and Training, and the Transportation Security Administration.

Each agency has a complementary role to ensure that transit agencies and their employees are prepared to effectively secure their systems, protect their passengers, and respond to any threat or actual incident.

This subcommittee held a similar transit security hearing in June 2004. Shortly thereafter, Chairman Young, Mr. Oberstar, Mr. Lipinski and I introduced legislation to authorize transit and over-the-road bus security grants. The Committee reported H.R. 5082, the Public Transportation Terrorism Prevention and Response Act, in September 2004. Unfortunately, the bill was not considered by the full House before the end of the 108th Congress. It is likely that we will use what we learn here today to craft a similar bill, authorizing general funds to be appropriated for these security grant programs.

The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee has a very broad jurisdiction that includes every mode of transportation. Each of these modes has unique operations and security challenges. These differences need to be recognized by providing separate, mode-specific transportation security grant programs.

These unique modal operations and vulnerabilities also should be reflected in a security grant program that ensures that funds are allocated using a fair, risk-based methodology, with grant eligibilities that meet the needs of the industry. SAFETEA LU directed the Departments of Transportation and Homeland Security to issue joint regulations to establish the characteristics of and requirements for public transportation security grants. In today's hearing, we will request an update on the status of these regulations, which we hope will establish a consistent grant administration process.